

## THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

more into direct administration. The governors after Bonard had too short a tenure of office to do anything but perpetuate this "temporary" arrangement, and the modifications that they made were in detail rather than in principle.

La Grandiere's five-year administration was by far the most important. His was a curious combination of the Protectorate ideal with a military regime. This Admiral's extensive powers included nominating his subordinates, assessing taxes, drawing up the budget and a public works programme, and creating a school for interpreters. A strict training was given to prospective administrators in the *College des stagiaires* at Saigon, which now opened this career to other than military men. Their number was increased and their new functions assigned on the basis of experience. Naturally a conflict ensued between the three Inspector-Officers in charge of each province. Theoretically they were equals, but in reality the Class I Inspector dominated his disgruntled colleagues. That the government functioned as well as it did was due to the remarkable talents of the men who were Cochinchina's first Inspectors. Daily contact with new experiences served to temper up the usually unsupple military mind.

With the establishment of the Third Republic there was naturally a return to the assimilationist principles of 1875.<sup>1</sup> When the new government had had time to realize that the military were still in control of Cochinchina, there was an immediate move to replace them by a more democratic regime. Their choice of a civil governor was, characteristically, upon an ex-prefect, Le Myre de Vilers, who had, however, some Algerian experience. The very precise instructions with

which he was saddled showed a total lack of understanding of the Innamite mind and of the preparation it would need before ideas of French liberty, equality, and fraternity could be absorbed. Le Myre was fortunately able enough to give an elastic interpretation to the orders of an uninformed bureaucracy, anxious to shape the colony after its own image.

Application of the principle of the separation of powers, as a means of controlling the colony's governor, was the chief object of Le Myre's efforts. He created the Colonial Council as a further check to gubernatorial irresponsibility. It was also to serve as a representative organ for the French of the colony, and to a lesser extent of the native Notables. Time was to show that this Council's control of the budget was a serious defect: their selfish disposal of the colony's revenues

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, p. 399.